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ABSTRACT

In 1975, the Center for the Study of Community Colleges conducted a national survey of humanities faculty in two-year colleges. This paper summarizes the characteristics of 110 liberal arts/drama instructors included in the total sample of 1,493 full- and part-time faculty. Findings of the survey include: (1) 73% of the 110 taught liberal arts, 28% taught speech, and 8% taught literature; (2) 31% had been students in community/junior colleges; (3) 71% were males; (4) 40% fell between the ages of 31-40 years; (5) more than any other discipline, liberal arts/drama instructors held graduate degrees in various fields; (6) 82% were full-time faculty, while 26% were employed in jobs in addition to their faculty position; (7) 2% claimed to be working toward the master's degree and 29% claimed to be working toward the doctorate; (8) liberal arts/drama instructors ranked self-knowledge/personal identity as the most important quality a student should gain from a two-year college education. Information concerning attitudes toward students and the humanities, professional development, reference group identification, and job satisfaction are also reported. For the full survey report, see ED 121 358. (JDS)

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A PROFILE OF LIBERAL ARTS/DRAMA INSTRUCTORS IN TWO-YEAR COLLEGES

A nationwide survey of 1493 people teaching the humanities in 156 two-year colleges--carefully selected in terms of locale, control, emphasis, size and age--was conducted in spring, 1975 by the Center for the Study of Community Colleges. The faculty sample was drawn to include proportionate numbers of both full-time and part-time instructors. Sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the project revealed demographic data as well as attitudes toward students and the humanities, reference group identification, satisfaction, and preference for further preparation. In this paper liberal arts/drama instructors in the sample are compared with the total group of faculty in art, anthropology, foreign language, history, law/government, liberal arts/drama, literature, music, philosophy, political science, religious studies, and social sciences.

Since this subset of liberal arts instructors is also composed of people teaching drama who may be involved in performance as well as history and literature of the drama, we may expect certain similarities to other art disciplines--specifically art and music. That is, although the definition of the humanities offered by the National Endowment for the Humanities precludes the performing arts, many instructors are responsible for performance as well as history and literature. Thus, we anticipate that on several dimensions the 110 subjects teaching liberal arts/drama who represent 7%* of the total 1493 subjects will be similar to the 7% who are in art and the 6% who are in music. Actually, 73% of the 110 teach liberal arts, 28% speech/drama and 8% literature.

More than any other discipline, people teaching the liberal arts/drama hold graduate degrees in various fields. While other groups often have one or two people who may have majored in some "unconventional" field, most cluster in one or at best two areas. For the liberal arts/drama people there is a greater dispersion in degrees. The largest portion of this group (28%) claim literature as their major, while 24% indicate speech/drama; 16%, music; and 15%, education.

Thirty-one percent of these instructors had been students in community/junior colleges. Seventy-one percent are male (67% total, 61% art and 81% music). The largest clustering (21% is at 36-40 years, and the next largest (19%), is at 31-35 years. The other groups vary considerably, with no particular tendencies to any set age patterns.

*All figures are rounded.

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Like most other groups, their backgrounds are much the same here, with 93% claiming to be white/Caucasian, 4% declining to answer, 3% being Black/Negro and 1% citing "other." We can hardly say that affirmative action is making its impact here or in any other of the humanities areas.

As for books in the homes in which respondents were raised, 40% claim over 200 books; 27%, 101-200; and 24%, 26-100. These figures closely approximate both the total group and the two other disciplines that are being used for comparative purposes--art and music.

Experience

Like the total group, 41% had had no experience as instructors or administrators in secondary schools. Even more (46%, 55% total) had not functioned in either of those capacities beyond the level of teaching or research assistant. These figures differ quite markedly, not only from the total group but also from the art and music instructors. Like these others, however, the years a faculty member taught in a two-year college tended to be 5-10, followed by 3-4 and then 1-2.

A little under two-thirds of the liberal arts/drama people (61%; 67% total) had not been chairpersons of their departments or divisions. Comparatively speaking, however, more had functioned as directors of a special program and only a few had served as administrators, as was true of the other samples.

And also true of the other groups, 5-10 years was the most popular range that liberal arts/drama people had spent in their current institutions. Indeed, more people in this discipline (51%) than in any other had designated this particular time span.

Chairpersons

As compared with the total sample (15%), a fair number of liberal arts/drama instructors (18%) were currently acting as chairpersons in their departments or divisions. Forty percent had previously employed instructors who held the doctorate, even though 95% reported no pressure either way (hire or not) to do so. Sixty-five percent said they did plan to hire candidates with this graduate degree, and 37% indicated they would hire the best person, regardless of degrees.

When it came to actual experience with doctorate holders, 35% of the people in this disciplinary group, as compared with 22% of the total sample, noted that their performance was the same as other teachers, and 20% reported they were fine/excellent/good teachers.

Teaching Hours/Full-Time/Part-Time

Liberal arts/drama faculty members tend to spend much the same number of hours in teaching as do the total group of respondents but fewer hours than the art and music people. Eighty-two percent are considered to be full-time instructors and 26% (exactly the same as the total) are employed in jobs in addition to their faculty appointments at the sampled colleges. When they are so employed, the time varies from 1-10 hours for 59% to 11-20 hours for 21% and 31-40 hours for 10%. The tendency here is to the lesser numbers of hours employed outside their teaching jobs.

Reference Groups

Reference groups are viewed here in terms of their usefulness as sources of advice on teaching. When it comes to the eight reference groups that were offered as potential sources of advice, colleagues were seen first as quite useful by the liberal arts/drama people. This is consistent with the total sample, a consistency that is perpetrated in all cases, with the exception of the fifth choice which was tied. In descending order, seen as quite useful are the following other groups: students, department chairpersons, professional journals, university professors and programs of professional organizations (tied), high school teachers, and administrators.

Journals

For the total group of respondents, about one-fourth reported subscribing to and reading no scholarly journals within their disciplines, while 31% of the liberal arts/drama people so reported. A few more people in this discipline (67%) than the total (64%) said they read no professional education journals. And when it comes to journals or magazines of general interest, a few more liberal arts/drama instructors (79%) than the total (78%) say none.

Professional Development

When compared with the total group (7%), very few (2%) liberal arts/drama people are working for their masters degree, but more (29%; 24% total, 20% music, and 11% art) indicate that they are working on their doctorates. At the same time, most (91%, total 86%) say that in the next five years they would like to take steps toward professional development. Getting a Ph.D. or Ed.D. most appeals to those who answered the previous question in the affirmative. 35% of the liberal arts/drama people and 34% of the total group

so responding. Twenty-eight percent (32% total) say they would like to enroll in courses in a university. Interestingly, more liberal arts/drama instructors (12%) than their peers in any other discipline (10% total) suggest they would like to enroll in in-service courses at their colleges.

If a free summer were available, next to the foreign language people (70%) this group is more likely to want to travel (59% liberal arts/drama; 53% total). In order of preference, they would like to do a combination of meeting classes/research/and workshops; take classes/study/and read; recreation and reading; and create/perform/ and/or paint. The latter choice varies considerably between the liberal arts/drama and total groups--with 18% of the former so indicating, compared to 8% of the total.

Were they to begin training all over again, liberal arts/drama people fall slightly below the total group in terms of saying they would do the same/change nothing (27%; total 33%) and a little above the total in terms of feeling they would study the humanities (17%; total 12%). However, about twice as many in this discipline (liberal arts/drama, 12%; total 5%) indicate they would take more psychology/ personal development courses.

Five Years Hence

Liberal arts/drama instructors are exactly like the total group in terms of rank ordering positions that they think would be desirable five years hence. In order, they rank a faculty position at a four-year college or university; doing what they are currently doing; a school outside the United States; a faculty position at another community or junior college; an administrative position in a community or junior college; a non-teaching, non-academic position; a position in a professional association; no idea; and any position but the college in which they are presently employed.

Affiliation

Eighty-two percent of the liberal arts/drama epople claim to be members of professional organizations (78% total). Most of the people who claim membership belong to one organization (29%), then two (27%) and three (18%). Almost half attended one or more regional or national meetings. Only 10% presented one paper and 2%, two.

As for their relationship with significant others in their lives, our liberal arts/drama people followed the pattern established by the total group. They are most related to their friends, their

family, other instructors in their field, most instructors at their school, students, teacher organizations and, last, college administrators. Incidentally, their relationship with the latter group was lower than for any other group. Whereas their score was 29% affiliated, the total was 37%, 45% art and 41% music. In this case they are closest to the literature people who claim 32% affiliation with college administrators.

Students

When asked to rate the qualities they think students should gain from a two-year college education, the liberal arts/drama instructors differ somewhat from the total sample. Both groups indicate as their first choice self-knowledge/personal identity and also agree on the fifth and last alternatives, knowledge and skills applicable to careers and understanding and mastery of some academic discipline. However, they choose as second in order of importance, aesthetic awareness (also second for art, but fourth for the total and first for music); third, knowledge of and interest in community and world problems, (second for total); and fourth, preparation for further formal education (third for total).

As for the number of courses they think students in two-year occupational programs should be required to take, like all groups except anthropology, they point to the largest offering--six or more courses. Their second and third choices are two and four.

This particular discipline is like only the art group in that 50% feel that films are insufficiently offered on their campuses--consistently responding with a "too few" to all five offered alternatives. Like the total group, they rank colloquiums and seminars as most insufficient, and both exhibits and concerts and recitals as second in the extent to which they are seldomly offered to students.

Experience and Curriculum

Consistency is indicated by the liberal arts/drama people too in terms of their experiences with the humanities other than through their teaching. In order of importance, they rank visiting art museums, shows, exhibits, concerts, theatre and films first; then, reading, listening to records and radio and watching TV; and attending classes, lectures, seminars.

More people in liberal arts/drama than in any other discipline indicated that humanities courses at their colleges had been added or improved in the past seven years. And more than any discipline except religious studies (10% for both), they felt that humanities had been

integrated into interdisciplinary courses.

As for changes they would like to see affected, again people in this discipline opt for the addition and improvement of humanities courses (35% liberal arts/drama; 30% total) and improved facilities and materials (13% liberal arts/drama, and 7% total). They also would like to see interdisciplinary courses, more extra curricular courses, and more emphasis on individual development and seminars. Again, these are all responses to open-ended inquiries.

The Colleges

Ninety percent of the liberal arts/drama people (86% total) are in public two-year colleges that are comprehensive (91% liberal arts; 90% total). These respondents are almost equally split (43% each) between colleges built between 1960 and 1969 and those erected in 1959 or earlier. These figures are much like the total group.

The biggest single clustering of respondents is at institutions with 2500-4999 students, with colleges of student enrollments of 15,000 and more accounting for 17%, and colleges of 10,000-14,999 having 16%. Seventy percent of these instructors are functioning in single campus institutions, 25% in multi-campus ones, and 6% in two-year divisions of four-year colleges.

In Sum

Liberal arts/drama people do not stand out as radically different from the total group, nor are they consistently identifiable with either the art or music faculties. Indeed, they are often between these two disciplines in terms of their relationships to given constructs, a fact that may be attributed in part to the multiplicity of their degree backgrounds and the overlap among disciplines.

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